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This paper aims to faithfully introduce the nationalism discourses in contemporary China and examine China's perception of East Asia that these discourses reflect. Nationalism, along with neo-conservatism, is a keyword to understanding China's contemporary ideological trends. A full-fledged nationalism discourse in China did not begin until Deng Xiaoping's decision to open up China to capitalism, symbolized by his 1992 inspection tour of southern China. If the early modern period saw the coupling of nationalism with socialism, there was a coupling of nationalism with conservatism after the reform and opening. The characteristics of contemporary nationalism become clear when compared with those of modern nationalism. First, modern nationalism's foremost task was reforming the feudal system. China's contemporary nationalism, on the other hand, buttresses the legitimacy and stability of the existing political system and takes a critical attitude toward the Western development model and political system. Second, modern nationalism is founded on anti-traditionalism, but contemporary nationalism is culturally conservative, focusing on the superiority of traditional Chinese culture. According to one Japanese researcher, the former is sometimes called rooted [有根] nationalism—nationalism of resistance—while the latter is referred to as rootless [無根] nationalism—nationalism of confidence.

The task of understanding China's perception of East Asia in Chinese nationalism started not out of a desire to learn its substance and characteristic features but from the following question: why does China, unlike Japan, lack a discourse on Asia? It is curious why China has been without a notable discourse on Asia since the fall of the Chinese empire a century ago. This is all the more curious now given that China reigns as a dominant power in East Asia. I cautiously argue that China does not necessarily lack a discourse on East Asia but that such a discourse exists in a Sinicized form. That is, China's nationalism discourse has emerged as an ideology determining the internal and external characteristics of China as a nation-state, taking socialism's place amidst the changing post-Cold-War international climate. Chinese intellectuals have internalized the idea of "East Asia in China" rather than "China in East Asia." China's rise as a major economic power in the 21st-century only strengthens this tendency.

Among the six strains of nationalism this paper will discuss, anti-Western nationalism and tianxia [天下] nationalism emerged from the internalization of "East Asia in China." The first similarity these two forms of nationalism share is that the West (mainly USA) is designated as China's counterpart. The problem with anti-Western nationalism and tianxia nationalism is that they position China

against the West without incorporating democratic values or an East Asian consensus. That being the case, their resistance against the Western value system lacks credibility. The difference between the two strains of nationalism is that while anti-Western nationalism is conscious of becoming an alternative and highlights anti-modernist elements, tianxia nationalism emphasizes an economic rapport with capitalism. Tianxia nationalism actually insists that nationalism is something that must be overcome, revealing a logical contradiction. In the meantime, it is difficult for anti-Western nationalism to divert the criticism that it is being irresponsible and negligent in assuming anti-modernist elements in contemporary Chinese nationalism. The reason being anti-Western nationalism sets forth its arguments without a thorough assessment of the failures of Chinese socialism. As for tianxia nationalism, its flaw lies in the fact that nationalism does not exist independently from the process of the formation of a nation-state, the most effective unit for capitalist development. Furthermore, in reality, tianxia-ism has not been a force moderating nationalism; tianxia-ism and nationalism have been mutually reinforcing. It is more compelling to describe the objective condition of an imperialist nation-state such as China as follows: the mutual penetration of the imperialist system of the Sinocentric world order and the nation-state system of the modern world order.

I call for these two strains of nationalism and all other forms of Chinese nationalism to secure democracy internally and an East Asian impetus externally. For internal democracy, nationalism and democracy must converge through the rationalization of the former and the irrationalization of the latter. For an East Asian impetus, China should alter its outlook from “East Asia in China” to “China in East Asia.” To these ends, China must first go through the process of self-objectification. Sun Yatsen’s rule of right, which lacks self-awareness, holds no relevance in 21st-century East Asia. It is because East Asia is no longer “peripheries”; it is a “region.” Without a change in outlook, Chinese nationalism will not be able to garner domestic or overseas support.

Keywords: Nationalism, democracy, perception of East Asia, tianxia-ism [tianxiazhuyi], Western paradigm

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I. The Parameters of the Chinese Nationalism Debate

Nationalism, along with neo-conservatism, is a keyword to understanding China's cultural and ideological trends of the 1990s and the 2000s. Neo-conservatism can be regarded as an unofficial political route adopted by the Chinese government in order to maintain political stability for economic growth after suppressing the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protest. Nationalism, on the other hand, can be regarded as a trend that formed naturally during the process of China's pursuit of modernization. However, the scope of the nationalism debate can be expanded against the backdrop of neo-authoritarianism and neo-conservatism.

If the early modern period saw the coupling of nationalism with socialism, there was a coupling of nationalism with conservatism after China's reform and opening, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen Square democratization movement. The Cultural Revolution was the turning point that led to this shift. This may seem obvious given that the Cultural Revolution spelled the demise of real socialism. However, what really

mattered was not so much the Cultural Revolution itself but the trauma it induced. The devastating and painful experience of the Cultural Revolution was probably the main reason why the harsh suppression of 4 June 1989 was tolerated. It has only been about 40 years since the Chinese government and people recovered political stability after a century of disorder following territorial fracturing due to semi-colonial rule. Moreover, China recognizes political stability as an absolute value for economic development.

It is in this sense that the Cultural Revolution can be regarded as the ideological source of China's neo-conservatism and "conservative nationalism." To the radicals, the 1989 repression, as a reverberation from the shock of the Cultural Revolution, also signifies a setback for the New Culture Movement that had been carrying on the legacy of the May 4 Movement. After the Tiananmen Square incident, the Chinese government has been shaping the May 4 Movement as a symbol of patriotism, rather than of democracy and science. This trend has further intensified this year (2009), the 90th anniversary of the May 4 Movement (Baek Yeong-seo, May 7, 2009).

There are differing interpretations of what constitutes neo-conservatism between the state and intellectuals as well as among intellectuals themselves (Cho, 2008). Similarly, there is more than one understanding of Chinese nationalism. Accordingly, in order to get a grasp of the overall landscape of the current discussion on Chinese nationalism, one must know the Chinese government's interpretation, the various interpretations set forth by academia, the differences between them, and what the differences signify. A rather simplified breakdown of the different views in the scholarly community would be as follows: New Leftist nationalism, liberal nationalism, conservative nationalism, and popular nationalism of the internet. The views are diverse, and thus, to conclusively say Chinese nationalism is this or that does not contribute to its historical or academic analysis.

For instance, it would be highly problematic to consider that the

understanding of Chinese nationalism set forth in *Unhappy China* [中國不高興]—which became an instant bestseller upon its release in March 2009—is representative of the view of the Chinese scholarly community or in line with the view of the Chinese government. The book was co-authored by famous scholars who used to be categorized as leftist. It takes the standpoint of radical popular nationalism and can be considered a follow-up to *China Can Say No* [中國可以說不] published in 1997. As the titles suggest, both books target the United States. While it is premature to assess the scholarly community's reaction to *Unhappy China*, it appears to be less critical than it was to *China Can Say No*. This change is reflective of China's economic development over the past decade and the Chinese people's heightened confidence in their country after the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

This paper will be mindful of the above points as it examines the nationalism discourse in Chinese academia since China's reform and opening. The nationalism discourse did not become a hotly debated issue in China until Deng Xiaoping's decision to open up to capitalism, symbolized by his 1992 inspection tour of southern China [南巡講話]. Large-scale academic conferences followed, and nationalism has continued to be a subject of academic interest well into the 2000s. Moreover, given the changes in the regional order, nationalism is being regarded as a de facto ideology that speaks for the Chinese people, having taken the place of socialism.[1] Furthermore, nationalism may offer the most candid glimpse into the emotional aspect of Chinese academia's views of China and the world given that it is a discourse inherently projects self-awareness.

In studying China's nationalism discourse, one cannot but question why there is a conspicuous lack of a coherent discourse on East Asia or

[1] Daniel A. Bell, a Canadian scholar teaching at the Blue House, contends that Chinese socialism is no longer a guideline for the future of Chinese politics. It is merely used as a tool to control scholars and others (2008, p. 7).

Asia within China, especially given the changing regional order at the turn of the 21st century. A century ago, when the Chinese empire collapsed, the situation was such that China did not have the wherewithal to think about East Asia, let alone Asia at large. Today, however, with China behaving like a superpower—that is, relative to Japan, one cannot but wonder why China is without a notable discourse on East Asia or Asia to speak of.[2] As I was working on this paper, though, it dawned on me that perhaps China does not lack such a discourse but that the discourse is in a Sinicized form. As I examined the works of Chinese scholars after coming up with this hypothesis, I came to a tentative conclusion that large parts of the nationalism discourses in China are tantamount to China's discourses on East Asia and Asia in general. In some sense, this may be a natural consequence of the habitual tendency of Chinese intellectuals to think of "East Asia in China," not the other way around. This is the reason why I became even more interested in contemporary Chinese nationalism. Accordingly, while the primary aim of this paper is to faithfully present the distinctive characteristics of Chinese nationalism and the backdrop against which it rose, another important goal is to deduce and critically analyze the discourses on East Asia and Asia contained within the nationalism discourse in China.

II. Emergence of the Chinese Nationalism Discourse in the 1990s

The emergence of the discourse on nationalism after China's reform and opening in the 1990s can be attributed, in part, to collapse of the Cold-War order and to the post-colonial issues that had been lingering

[2] In the same vein, Baek Yeong-seo has already posed the question, "Is there 'Asia' in China?" What Baek meant here was that while China (the Chinese) is eager to engage to confront the Western world, it seems to show very little interest in establishing horizontal relations with its East Asian neighbors (2000, p. 49).

throughout the Cold War. A more direct cause—albeit irrelevant to the study of history—is the concurrent sense of crisis and anticipation bred by the process of modernization. On the back of the neo-authoritarianism and neo-conservatism that emerged in 1989, nationalism came to dominate the 1990s. Therefore, there was a shift in mood from the more liberal atmosphere of the 1980s. Against such a backdrop, nationalism, as mentioned earlier, became a widely accepted substitute for socialism; nationalism became an ideology that could justify the rule of the Chinese Community Party and maintain social unity. Reflective of the changing mood, academic conferences on nationalism were held one after another. In December 1992, a huge conference on "Nationalism and Modern China" was held at the Center for Chinese Cultural Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It was the first time a large number of Chinese scholars from Taiwan, China, and overseas gathered for a discussion on nationalism. On the mainland, two relatively large conferences were held, hosted by the government-run magazine *Strategic Management* [戰略與管理]. The themes were "The Changing World Order and Nationalism" (April 1994) and "Nationalism at the Dawn of a New Century"(November 1995). The latter, which was held in Shenzhen [深川], was an influential conference that dealt with the linkage between nationalism and the modernization of developing countries. Without some shared sense of the importance of the issue of nationalism between the Chinese government and the academic circle, large-scaled conferences could not have been held one after another across the Sinic sphere. At this juncture, it is necessary to take an in-depth look at the background behind the emergence of nationalism in China.

First, Chinese nationalism can be attributed to the collapse of the Cold War order. China had entered the Cold War without having become a complete nation-state. When the Cold War ended, China resumed the long-suspended project of becoming a nation-state, and nationalism arose in the process. Territorial issues and historical disputes in East Asia are related problems lingering as legacies of the Cold War. They are closely

tied to the fact that the Cold War system was set up before East Asia had fully addressed the region's post-colonial issues. In China's case, nationalism had been suppressed under a socialist system. However, in China's journey toward becoming a capitalist nation-state since its reform and opening, the Chinese people's desire to reshape their national image is being expressed in the form of nationalism. Here, we need to remember how New Leftist thought enjoyed widespread acceptance in academia between 1992 and 1993 as China experienced fundamental economic and social changes. Against this backdrop, social thinkers who later came to be called "New Leftists," including Wang Hui [汪暉] and Cui Zhiyuan [崔之元], began seeking alternative development trajectories to modernity. In the meantime, neo-statists, such as Hu Angang [胡安鋼] and Wang Shaoguang [王紹光], started focusing on the issue of state capacity. It is also in the same climate that nationalists such as Wang Xiaodong [王小東] came on the scene (Fewsmith, 2008, p. 141).

Second, the predominant view is that Chinese nationalism is a "natural" byproduct of the process of China's capitalist development. In other words, the socio-economic circumstances that gave rise to nationalism are thought to be intimately tied to modernity. Zhang Xudong [張旭東], a leftist cultural studies scholar who is in the United States, emphasizes that even some of the top contemporary nationalism experts, such as Ernest Gellner, E. J. Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson discussed nationalism, nationality, and nation-state within the specific parameters of modern, capitalist economy and large-scale social transformation. That is, modernism is the very key to understanding of the issue of nationalism (Zhang Xudong, 2000, p. 430). Ernest Geller has said that nationalism arises from the need for economic development, not the other way around. Nationalism is not a process by which a nation develops self-awareness it is invented (Gellner, 1981, p. 53). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the nationalism debate was invigorated after 1992, which is when China started to speed up and intensify its capitalist modernization process.

Third, Chinese nationalism was bolstered by the independence movement of ethnic minority groups following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. According to Sun Liping [孫立平] of Tsinghua University's Department of Sociology, Chinese intellectuals were deeply concerned about the wave of national independence movement spreading to China, which shares a border with what used to be the USSR. They worried that Chinese ethnic minorities would rise up for their independence, and this is what Sun sees as a catalyst that sparked the nationalism discourse in China. The collapse of the USSR and the eastern bloc, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in particular, bred pessimism among the Chinese people. That is, there developed a pervasive understanding that nothing is more dangerous than the dissolution of a political community in a time when existing consciousness is losing ground and social contradictions and crises are intensifying. Against this backdrop, some Chinese intellectuals advocated democracy and sought to turn it into an important resource during a period of ideological transition. It is in this sense that present-day Chinese nationalism is linked to practical needs (Sun, 2000, p. 375).

Fourth, Chinese nationalism emerged from the assessment that China's relations with the world have changed in just a couple of decades since reform and opening. In the early stages of China's modernization process, the West was a faraway object to emulate. Now, the West is a veritable competitor. Accordingly, conflicts of interest, especially trade friction, are growing in frequency. Accordingly, the Chinese are discovering that the market is not as rational as they had imagined and that the global economic order is irrational. This is why the relationship between multinational and national capital have become such a hot issue (Sun, 2000, pp. 376-377). In short, what Sun is pointing to is that the international economic order contains elements that appear unfair to the Chinese people and that these elements are the real cause of Chinese nationalism.

Fifth, the Chinese studies boom that began in the 1990s served as a

backdrop for the conservative nationalism discourse. The 90s witnessed a Mao Zedong boom and a widespread nostalgia for the past [懷舊]. The "yellow civilization" [黃色文明] was praised, and there was excessive glorification of the East Asian civilization. This led to the revitalized interest in traditional culture we see today (Hu, 2000, p. 355). These developments formed the background from which nationalism, and cultural nationalism in particular, emerged. While the Chinese government had not willed the strengthening of nationalism, it welcomed the development, nevertheless. It was because nationalism, in conjunction with Confucianism, was taking the place of socialism, which had long lost its efficacy as a socially unifying ideology.[3] Thus, it can be said that the developments that led to the emergence of nationalism in China have prescribed, to a certain extent, the substance of Chinese nationalism.

III. The Substance of Chinese Nationalism and Issues of Contention

1. Developmental Nationalism (Patriotism)

Six key nationalism discourses that emerged against the backdrop described above will be classified and presented. The first is the Chinese government's so-called developmental nationalism (patriotism). The government officially uses "patriotism" rather than "nationalism." In a socialist system, the term "nationalism" officially goes against internationalism. Accordingly, the Chinese government has consciously avoided its usage. The Chinese state media, too, uses "patriotism" rather than "nationalism." In addition to the aforementioned reason, the use of

[3] Daniel A. Bell projects that within the next two decades, the CCP will come to stand for the Chinese Confucian Party rather than the Chinese Communist Party (2008, p. 12). Bell's projection is not mere musing but points to something substantive.

"patriotism" can also be attributed to the Chinese government's motivation to restrain "regional nationalism" of Chinese ethnic minorities. Ideological education on patriotism has been carried out consistently since reform and opening, with the targets of patriotism being the homeland, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP; also known as the Communist Party of China [CPC]), and socialism (*People's Daily*, March 1, 1981).

However, as China's capitalist modernization process gained momentum after Deng Xiaoping's 1992 inspection tour of southern China, patriotism needed to be redefined. The goals of this "new" patriotism included the promotion of a market economy in addition to socialism and the CCP. Since the essential goal of reform and opening was for China to become a strong and prosperous country, building a capitalist economic system became a key component of the patriotism equation. In other words, there was a "merger between patriotism and the market economy" (Yang, 2002; Xu Anli, 1996). Patriotism thus demanded not only patriotic feelings toward the homeland but also toward the socialist homeland running a market economy. It is worth noting that the patriotism discourse did not have to be limited to fostering economic growth but could also contribute to the reproduction of the socialist nation-state. In other words, within the symbols of patriotism lie some of CCP's most important and difficult issues, including modernization, political stability, and economic development. That is why Jiang Zemin's remark—"Patriotism and narrow-minded nationalism are fundamentally different" (*People's Daily*, March 11, 1997)—was all the more meaningful. Here, narrow-minded nationalism refers to regional nationalism, and thus, Jiang's statement was directed at ethnic minorities and their "ethnic" outlook. As though in response to foreign backlash to Jiang Zemin's remarks and others along the same vein, Zheng Yongnian [鄭永年] argues for an approach that takes the Chinese perspective in examining the Chinese nationalism of the 1990s. Otherwise put, Zheng is claiming that Chinese nationalism should be understood as a means for

China's economic development, political stability, and territorial unity (1999, Ch. 5). It is unclear what exactly Zheng means by "an approach that takes the Chinese perspective." However, even if it is understood to be a mechanism for running the state and the society, there is still no room for the Chinese government's illogical definition of nationalism. Although Zhang's intentions are understandable, they are difficult to accept. The boundary between a scholar and a bureaucrat must exist, even if it may be fuzzy.

2. Rational Nationalism

The understanding of nationalism set forth by Jin Guantao [金觀濤] and Wu Guoguang [吳國光] can be categorized as rational nationalism. Jin Guantao at National Chengchi University [臺灣政治大學] takes on the nationalism issue in response to the argument laid forward by Lucien W. Pye [白魯恂], an American political scientist who used to be at MIT. Pye says that unlike US nationalism, which comprises unique and distinctive substance—i.e., the Constitution and the national flag, Chinese nationalism is devoid of essential and defining characteristics (Jin, February. 1993; Pye, February. 1992). Jin argues that Pye only talks about results but is unable to pinpoint causes. That is, Jin asserts that Pye has failed to explain how China's "empty" nationalism has been able to mobilize the masses. According to Jin, this "empty" ideology is Sinocentrism. Jin explains that Sinocentrism dissolved when Western forces entered China. After its dissolution, there was no way to sustain a nationalism based on a national identity or traditional culture. The reason being, the trends of internationalism and modern nationalism, which had emerged after the New Culture Movement, were absorbed into Marxism-Leninism and the Three Principles of the People [三民主義]. Therefore, Jin calls Marxism-Leninism the new Sinocentrism. An extreme manifestation of Sinocentrism was the Cultural Revolution, whose centerpiece was Maoism. The 20th century was a period during which

China broke away from traditional Sinocentrism and worked on constructing a modern nationalism. However, this process was self-induced, and thus, not subject to rational and objective criticism. Jin emphasizes that an open and rational nationalism should be the key objective in the reconstruction of Chinese culture in the 21st century (Jin, February. 1993, pp. 71-72). The significance of Jin's argument is that it takes issue with China's collective unconsciousness by linking Sinocentrism with the Cultural Revolution. When the Chinese scholarly community is observed from within, it becomes all the more evident that there is a general lack of self-objectification among Chinese academics.

Wu Guoguang, the Zhao Ziyang [趙紫陽] regime, contends that neither narrow-minded nationalism nor an idealist policy that ignores national interest is the approach China should take vis-à-vis an international community that had closed itself off from China. Wu emphasizes that China should carry out a coherent and thorough policy reform in order to strengthen national power and formulate a realist global strategy free of ideological leanings. He calls this "rational nationalism" (April. 1996, p. 26). Wu also asserts that the Chinese nationalism of the 1990s is complex, and thus, not something that cannot simply be accepted or rejected (February. 1997, p. 130). For Wu, rational nationalism must lie on the obscure boundary between reality and ideals while also encompassing both. One gets the impression that both Wu Guoguang and Jin Guantao premise their arguments on an implicit distinction between modern Chinese nationalism and Western nationalism and consider the latter to be rational.

3. Radical "Popular" Nationalism

The ideas set forth by Wang Xiaodong [王小東] belong to this strain. Sheng Hong [盛洪], whom we will mention later, treats nationalism like an import. Wang, in contrast, attempts to localize it (Sunayama, 2005, p. 19). Wang believes that under the current circumstances, nationalism is

the most essential ideology to advance China's self-interest and development. He stresses that the power of authority [强權] is still the universal principle and fundamental rule. He contends that China's present situation, in particular, demands nationalism (2000b, p. 19). That is why he is considered the flag bearer of nationalism in China. Wang explains that there still are divisions between states, nations, and ethnicities, and thus, the value of nationalism still holds. He insists that human rights cannot exist in complete separation from the nation. Some argue that individual rights are the goal while the rights of the nation and the state are means to realizing this goal. In response, Wang says that while the claim is not incorrect in principle, it is not relevant in today's international order. He concludes that national and state rights continue to be important. He says that national rights are synonymous with human rights in international relations while human rights are synonymous with national rights in domestic politics (2000, p. 94).

Wang is critical of both nationalism based on tradition and nationalists that criticize tradition. He flatly dismisses Sheng Hong's proposal of overcoming the Western spirit of competition with the Chinese spirit of harmony, "calling it a senseless remark by the powerless" (2000b, p. 70). Moreover, Wang considers the *River Elegy* [河殤] phenomenon, which sparked a heated debate about Chinese traditional culture, nothing more than a manifestation of national nihilism, which is akin to a doctor that tells a tuberculosis patient that his/her ancestors' chromosomes are to blame (Fang Ning, Song Qiang, Wang Xiaodong, et al., 1999, p. 105).

In the name of "national interest," Wang openly articulates what many scholars are thinking but dare not express. For instance, he makes blunt arguments concerning sensitive issues of resource, territorial, and population, which are linked to the accelerated pace of globalization after the disintegration of the Cold War system. He contends that securing enough resource is the most urgent challenge facing China and calls on Chinese intellectuals to take issue with the fact that the United States,

whose population is only a quarter of China's, imports more than three times the amount of natural resources than China does (Cho, 2008b, pp. 243-244). In comparing China's population problems with those of advanced nations, Wang raises the issue of immigration and that of the inequality in living space. He goes so far as to argue for the importance of militarism given that historically, competition for living space has even led to war (2000b, pp. 70-76). As a matter of fact, living space and immigration are interrelated issues worth examination and discussion. However, Wang does not attempt a fundamental exploration of nationalism from the human rights perspective. Instead, he only seems focused on national interest, ignoring or rejecting the "structural regulatory powers that exist between state regimes."[4] With his provocative comments about war, he is construed as being a radical and tends enjoy the support of the younger members of the public. That is why his version of nationalism has been tentatively named, "radical popular nationalism." Of the 44 essays in the aforementioned bestseller *Unhappy China*, 14 of them are by Wang Xiaodong's, attesting to the popularity Wang's views enjoy with the online public.[5]

Joseph Fewsmith, who had come up earlier, includes Wang Xiaodong in the leftist ideological landscape, presumably based on Wang's populist tendencies and discontentment with the government. Wang's nationalism contains criticisms of the government and a positive stance on democracy. Nevertheless, lurking underneath is the aim of defending the interests of the ruling elite. A case in point, Wang contends the transition to a democratic system will inevitably require the

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[4] This points to the operative principle of the modern state system that distinguishes between insiders and outsiders (Choi Gab-su, 2003, p. 17). There needs to be a critical assessment of the interstate system in terms of human rights. However, such an assessment requires an entirely different level of logic and discussion.

[5] The radicalism of Wang's nationalism has come under fire from both the Chinese government and the liberalists. This is probably due to the fear that Wang's extreme claims may alarm the West and threaten the stability required for China's peaceful rise [和平崛起].

leadership of the intelligentsia (2000b, p. 78). Nevertheless, Wang's nationalism, although it may appear rather crude, is the most straightforward among those presented in this paper, which is why it has an especially large following among Chinese youth.

4. Anti-Western Nationalism

Anti-Western nationalism is a noteworthy strain of Chinese nationalism. Zhang Xudong [張旭東] and other "New Left" intellectuals, are its key advocates. Zhang, a Chinese cultural studies scholar in the United States, argues that Chinese nationalism grew out of a reaction to the new "evil empire" founded on the ideologies of the free world after the collapse of the Cold War order. He goes on to say that in this sense, Chinese nationalism is one form of anti-Western resistance that can substitute communism, which has retreated into history. To Zhang, nationalism is a potential form of resistance against Western values and world order. He objects to both the notion of the "China threat" as well as the "orientalizing and "exoticizing" of China. According to Zhang, theories on Chinese nationalism cannot exist outside the global capitalist discourse system; this system of discourse stipulates Chinese society, culture, ideologies, politics, and economy, which exist within an international context. Western mass media and mainstream Chinese studies, however, do not attempt to understand Chinese nationalism in such a context. Zhang believes that without such an attempt, it is impossible to gain a comprehensive understanding of China, let alone Chinese nationalism (Zhang Xudong, 2000, pp. 434-437). Zhang's arguments are largely based on the ideas set forth by Ernest Geller and Tom Nairn, theorists of nationalism. Geller and Nairn find that the true source of nationalism does not lie in the individual's suppressed desire for identity but in the workings of the world economy. Here, it is not so much the process of development per se, but more specifically, the awareness of uneven development that is directly linked to nationalism

(Nairn, 1981, pp. 228-229). In other words, their understanding of nationalism begins with unevenness, an undeniable material reality. Nationalism is not a process by which a nation develops self-awareness. Rather, nationalism is born out of the need for economic development (Gellner, 1981, p. 153).

Zhang links nationalism with modernity. Taking the May 4 Movement as an example as the precursor of Chinese nationalism, Zhang stresses that true nationalism can communicate with internationalism. While there is a need for a nationalistic resistance to globalism, the resistance must derive from a self-conscious nationalism; and such nationalism, according to Zhang, can communicate with internationalism (Zhang, 2000, p. 437; Hao Chang, 2000; Wang Hui, 2000). Zhang asks whether China will be able to create an alternative to classic bourgeois nationalism drawing from China's historical specificity and distinctiveness. Such a post-modern concern is not easy to come by in the nationalism discourse in China. Herein lies the significance of Zhang's exercise. Nevertheless, there is a problem with his line of thinking. If it is argued that nationalism must be communicate with internationalism and if China is projected to be the creator of an alternative to the nationalism of the 20th century, there must be a discussion on how China may democratically resolve its various domestic issues and whether China will treat its East Asia neighbors equally. That is, Zhang's musings lack persuasion without a thorough examination of reality vs. ideal and the domestic vs. the global. A future outlook is unreasonable unless China and the world external to it are both perceived democratically and equally.

5. Conservative Cultural Nationalism

The leading figure of conservative cultural nationalism is Xiao Gongqin [蕭功秦]. He envisions a nationalism based on Confucianism. Therefore, he is critical of both the radical nationalism of Wang Xiaodong

aforementioned and the New Left's high regard for the anti-Western nationalism of the New Culture Movement. Xiao's study begins with a critique of the latter. He especially takes issue with the fact that anti-Western nationalism regards Confucianism an obstacle to national progress. To Xiao, anti-Western nationalism is a not a mainstream nationalism (Xiao Gongqin, 2001a, p. 378). Xiao states that Chinese nationalism is non-religious and highly secular as it is not messianic. Confucianism emphasizes peace, serenity, magnanimity, acceptance, and moderation. Xiao argues that such cultural values can serve to curb Chinese nationalism. Accordingly, Chinese nationalism of the 21st century could be the least nationalistic of nationalisms and possibly also the least narrow-minded according. He says the Confucian ideal of the oneness and brotherhood of humanity [四海之内皆兄弟] may only be fully realized once humankind enters a "post-nationalist" era (Xiao Gongqin, 2001b, pp. 237-238).

Xiao's conservative nationalism has come under the spotlight after Hu Jintao made a call for social harmony in 2004 and since ritual ceremonies for Confucius came to be officiated by the state starting in 2005. This was a rather unexpected turn of events given that China's official state ideology used to be anti-Confucian. Nowadays, however, the CCP seeks guidelines for China's future not so much from socialism but from Confucianism. Be that as it may, not everyone who talks about Confucian culture is endorsed by the Chinese government. Confucianism can be a double-edged sword for the CCP, especially at the institutional level.[6] However, the CCP does not impose any restrictions on Xiao's Confucian nationalism. This may signify the state's unofficial authorization of it.

An argument for a nationalism based on Confucianism must, at the

[6] For instance, it took 5 years after for Jiang Qing's *Political Confucianism: Shift in contemporary Confucianism* [政治儒學: 當代儒學的轉向,特質與發展] to be published due to political oppression.

very least, be preceded by an introspective examination of China's traditional society, which had operated on Confucian principles. What were the problems caused by Confucianism? That is, there needs to be a comprehensive evaluation of the common understanding that Confucianism had been built on the sufferings of the common people. Only after that would a modernized and reconstituted Confucianism be acceptable.

6. Tianxia-ism [天下主義; Universalism]

Li Shenzhi [李慎之], Sheng Hong [盛洪], and Zhao Tingyang [趙汀陽] propose tianxia nationalism. They base their conception of nationalism in Confucianism. In this sense, tianxia nationalism closely resembles conservative cultural nationalism discussed earlier. The difference is that while Xiao Gongqin is labeled a conservative, champions of universal nationalism are considered liberals. Xiao has more faith in the possibility of Confucianism at large. In contrast, the advocates of tiaxia nationalism have China's future pinned specifically on tianxia-ism, the core of the Confucian thought system, in conjunction with liberal values.

Li Shenzhi passed away a long while back. He was a renowned economist, serving as the strategist behind Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening. He was one of the first to focus on the causes behind the emergence of intense and exclusivist nationalism in the 1990s. With penetrating insight, he came to the conclusion that Chinese nationalism of the 1990s was the result of the mutually-reinforcing dynamics between nationalism and tianxia-ism, a traditional cultural concept. Nevertheless, he believed tianxia-ism had the power to keep nationalism in check. He went on to concentrate his studies on the restraining power of tianxia-ism (Li Shenzhi, 1994).

Zhao Tingyang and Sheng Hong carries on this line of argument and assert that nationalism should be controlled and overcome by tianxia-ism. In *Tianxia System*, which was widely discussed in China,

philosopher Zhao Tingyang takes issue with the fundamentally dichotomous and confrontational political outlook of the West that pits the "I" against "the other," the believers against the non-believers, and the West against the East. He argues that the world cannot stand on such a political viewpoint nor depend on it (Zhao Tingyang, 2005).

Sheng Hong, an economist, holds that nationalism will inevitably lead to the fall of humanity, and that tianxia-ism is the only option if this is to be avoided (Sheng Hong, 2000). Sheng even insists that Western civilization is anti-liberal and barbaric. Hence, he calls the history of the relations between modern China and the West as the "history of the invasion of the 'new barbarians' [新蠻族]." According to Sheng, liberalism can save the world. He goes on to say that Chinese civilization is liberal while Western civilization is not. Hence, Chinese civilization can save the world while the Western civilization cannot (Sheng Hong, 1995). The tianxia-ism discourse can be regarded as one face of a familiar musing that arises from nostalgia for an imperial past and the expectations for an imperial future. Nevertheless, reverting to tianxia-ism in the 21st century appears to be a call for a Sinocentric worldview rather than for universalism.

Tianxia was a dominant ideology in traditional China. It considers China not as a country but as the world. It deems the culture and ethics developed out of the Hua-Yi [華夷] distinction as the highest standards of national identity. Some assess that this traditional ideology dissolved when China adopted Social Darwinism in the modern era. This is because the formation of modern China can be regarded as China's transition from being the "world" [tianxia] to being a "state." So then why has tianxia-ism re-emerged a century later? Moreover, why is it being promoted as a means of overcoming nationalism? In reality, however, tianxia-ism and nationalism seem to be mutually reinforcing and inching closer to one another as Li Shenzhi pointed out. The fact that tianxia-ism is being discussed as an alternative to nationalism at this point in time is reminiscent of the thesis of "salvation of the world by

Chinese culture" [中國文化救世說].

Some may argue that tianxia-ism should not even be considered a form of nationalism given that it is proposed as a way to overcome nationalism. However, in another sense, it appears to be a very intense and aggressive call for Chinese-style nationalism. It must be noted that this neo-tianxia-ism has re-emerged as China has built a powerful nation-state through economic development.

IV. Understanding of East Asia and its Critique Embodied in the Chinese Nationalism Discourse

Save for anti-Western nationalism, at the core of the varying forms of Chinese nationalism discussed above lies a development paradigm for national prosperity and military power. Under this super-ordinate concept of national prosperity and military power are diverse subordinate concepts, including ethnic minority, imperialist nation-state, socialism, national interest, and Confucianism. The issue here is whether the application of post-modern standards, considered general practice in Korean and Japanese academic circles, is reasonable in the study of Chinese nationalism. If it is not, the next question is how to devise a set of applicable standards.

In formulating a set of standards for assessing Chinese nationalism, it is important to concentrate on the two seemingly conflicting roles nationalism has played for and against the spread of the nation-state system throughout the world. "Nationalism has sparked, on the one hand, national liberation movements, which can be considered anti-establishment. On the other hand, it has buttressed the national pursuit of prosperity and military might. Any nation, once it succeeds in building a state, develops a nationalism that is official in nature. That is, the state carries out a large-scale expansion of the cultural infrastructure for national unity and nationalization so that all of its people internalize the official national identity. These two facets of nationalism display the

following dichotomies: liberation/repression, division/unity, and establishment/anti-establishment" (Choi Gab-su, 2003, pp. 16-17).

The struggle for national liberation waged by the Third World, including China, could be linked to the value of human liberation. However, it is now common knowledge that what the fight for national liberation ended up doing was strengthen the capitalist system. In the early to mid-20th century, securing sovereignty was the key to national prosperity and military might. Thus, national liberation was regarded as an absolute value. After the reform and opening, however, securing sovereignty is no longer a concern. As such, prosperity and military power are now national objectives in and of themselves. What this signifies is that nationalism can now mean repression or unity rather than liberation.

China only became something close to a unified state in 1949 after a century of conflicts. This was also when China was expelled from the global capitalist system. That is, China became a socialist nation-state. Yet even this—China's socialist nation-state system—collapsed during the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966. Hence, building a capitalist nation-state system only became possible after the reform and opening. It has only been 30 years since China has undertaken reforms and opened itself up to the world. Otherwise put, it has only been 30 years since China has set sail as a modern, capitalist nation-state.

The situation was similar in Korea during the early stages of modernization in the 1960s and 1970s; nationalism was linked to the pursuit of economic and military power. There was overwhelming social acceptance of this linkage, so the task of stepping back and evaluating it was not easy. Things were probably not much different for Japan when it took its first steps toward modernization. "Let us remember it took Europe a millennium to naturally evolve into nations and states" (Choi Gab-su, 2003, p. 16). Even if there is an awareness of the issues of modernity, a true examination may only be possible after having been completely saturated in modernity for a good while.

Here, I consciously stress the process and steps of modernization. This is not to lend blind support to the Chinese academia's discourse on national prosperity and strength. The intention is to come up with a set of parameters for properly analyzing it. The progressive factions of Japanese and Korean academia are carrying out a civilizational and foundational examination of national prosperity and military power. If such a trend were applied to China's case, it is sure to be met with Chinese opposition. The Chinese would argue that Japan and Korea, having climbed up to a certain level of development, are kicking the ladder that got them there when China is still on it. Countries that have experienced socialism may be hesitant about reflecting on modernity given that they have first-hand experience in the illusions of anti-modernity. That is why for China, for instance, just because it has let go of the illusions of capitalism does not automatically mean that it can consider socialism history.

Once we do away with the optical illusions about China, what and how do we discuss Chinese nationalism? I want to address this question by undertaking a critical analysis of anti-Western nationalism and tianxia nationalism (which may include conservative cultural nationalism in some cases), which have been mentioned earlier. The other forms of nationalism that have been discussed can be found in the formative stages of nation-states. However, anti-western nationalism and tianxia nationalism demand special attention because they encompass not just the process of the formation of a nation-state but also uniquely Chinese elements. Moreover, the two forms of nationalism have direct and indirect linkages to China's perception of East Asia, making them all the more interesting.

Regarding anti-Western nationalism, its proponent Zhang Xudong, calls for an examination of Chinese nationalism not through the lens of the "Chinese threat" or orientalism but within the context of the universal process of the globalization of capitalism. That is, according to Zhang, Chinese nationalism is not an anomaly; it is but one manifestation of

uneven development in a globalized system of nation-states. While Zhang acknowledges the role of modernity in Chinese nationalism, he also presents a postmodern perspective on Chinese nationalism. Thus, Zhang demonstrates both the limitations and possibilities of nationalism in China. This is the strength of Zhang's anti-Western nationalism.

As aforesaid, there must be an examination of the way by which he raises fundamental issues concerning the Western world order and values. At the same time, we must also rigorously question the possibility of creating a nation-state different from the Western prototype. Two questions are warranted regarding the Zhang's approach. There are two ways one can raise fundamental questions about the West. The first method acknowledges, at least minimally, the achievements of Western modernity. The second rejects them completely. What I am trying to say here is that China could be misunderstood if it insists only on surmounting the West without acknowledging the latter's achievements. Other countries may think China has hegemonic ambitions and aspires to overthrow the West. Also, if there is no discussion of democracy in one form or another as China builds a new domestic order, this new order will lack credibility. The inability to be self-critical or handle internal criticisms while taking issue with the outside world is the very trap that relativism falls into by turning a blind eye to what is happening internally but criticizing orientalism. Accordingly, the resistance to West-centrism will only ring sincere if it is accompanied by a call for internal reform.

Another issue to consider is whether in problematizing the West-centric intellectual and power systems, Zhang and the New Left provide grounds for an East Asian impetus that will get the rest of East Asia to agree with such a problematization. Since the 1990s, there have been voices in China, with the nationalist faction and the New Left at the helm, for China to reclaim its sovereignty, which had been compromised by the forces of West-centrism. It is a reasonable call. However, unless East Asia as a whole can relate to China's argument and find a collective cause in it, it can very well be construed as Sinocentrism. Here, it is

worthwhile to mention the "dual eyes of the periphery" [이중의 주변의 눈] set forth by Baek Yeong-seo, who argues for a critical East Asian discourse (Spring 2008, p. 40). Unless the act of criticizing West-centrism secures the dual eyes of the periphery, the same questions targeted toward the West will not be addressed in relation to China, which holds a central position in East Asia. That is, the same questions directed at "the other" must be directed toward oneself as well. Otherwise, the questions will lack moral legitimacy. Here, the "questions directed toward oneself" are those directed at East Asia, including China, and these questions reveal the center and the periphery of East Asia. There is something that needs to be made clear. The questions that China directs toward itself must fulfill the following condition: they must be questions about "China in East Asia" not about "East Asia in China." That is, East Asia should not be considered to be a part of China. An East Asia in China has neither center nor periphery. There is only a weak China vis-à-vis a powerful West. However, a China in East Asia, or otherwise put, in an East Asia that exists outside of China, there are various centers and peripheries. In turn, there is then the "lowest periphery" where all the peripheral issues are aggregated. The act of taking issue with the Western intellectual system without including an East Asian impetus—i.e., the "lowest periphery"—will only be considered an argument for hegemony. In short, it will alleviate the demarcation between the powerful and the weak; it will be merely reverse of positions between the powerful and the weak.

China has not secured the "dual eyes of the periphery." This may be why the scholars in neighboring countries express skepticism toward the field of humanities in China. As Lu Xun [魯迅] and Takeuchi Yoshimi [竹内好] point out, if China wants to become the truly subjective "I" and "China," it must engage itself in a dual resistance of "trying to be oneself while also trying to overcome oneself" (Takeuchi, 2004, p. 47). Here, if the struggle "to be oneself" is a resistance against the powerful, the struggle "to overcome oneself" signifies a refusal to

become the powerful.

Zhang Xudong contends that Chinese nationalism is a form of anti-Western resistance that has taken the place of communism, which has faded into history. He asks whether China will be able make use of its historical particularity and distinctiveness to create a new form of a nation-state based on a nationalism different from the classic bourgeois nationalism. Before asking this question, however, there must be a thorough analysis of whether today's nationalism has the substance to take the place of communism and put up a resistance against the West. It cannot be denied that in its formative phase during the Socialist era, Chinese nationalism included anti-modern elements, albeit as auxiliary features. Yet now that the anti-modern elements have receded, Chinese nationalism's proclivities toward modernity have come to the fore. This process has strengthened state-centrism that is accompanied by patriotism (Baek Seung-uk, Winter 2007). If contemporary Chinese nationalism is stripped of anti-modern inclinations, is state-centric, and shuns the subjecthood of the people, it is highly unlikely that it has what it takes to resist the West and create a new type of a nation-state. Of the two facets of nationalism discussed earlier, Chinese nationalism today appears to be repressive and pro-establishment rather than pro-liberation and anti-establishment. It is safe to say that Chinese nationalism has been veering away from a nationalism founded on national pride. Since the 1990s, Chinese nationalism has grown increasingly official in nature, supporting the state's pursuit of national prosperity and military power.

In order to reorient its ideological and spiritual basis for the creation of a new type of a nation-state, China must undertake a serious and disciplined reflection of the Cultural Revolution and the history of Chinese socialism at large. Without it, the call for a new type of nation-state could be misconstrued as an attempt to revive the socialism of the past in today's China where the very trauma from socialism is an important social driver. Even just to disprove such misunderstandings, China must acknowledge that socialism was but a variant of the

discourse on national wealth and military strength. Such an acknowledgment is a precondition for China to formulate new aspirations. The history of global capitalism and socialism has taught us that modernity, although riddled with problems, is not easy to overcome.

Next, regarding tianxia nationalism, it must be noted that there has been a complete reversal in the relationship between tianxia-ism and nationalism. Today, the call is to overcome nationalism by tianxia-ism. About a century ago, between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, there was a call for the complete opposite. A century ago, intellectuals, who considered it their task to shape the Chinese nation-state and nationhood, tianxia-ism was regarded as something nationalism needed to conquer. The Chinese people, who were only aware of tianxia and not the state, were not citizens but mere tribes [部民] that posed as obstacles to conquering tianxia-ism. This was because back then, the most pressing task for China was to turn "tianxia" into a state and its people [百姓] into citizens [國民].

The reversal in the relationship between tianxia-ism and nationalism is probably a reflection of the self-confidence China has developed from the economic progress it has achieved since the reform and opening. Regardless, it is a dramatic change in a relatively short period of time. As Liang Shuming [梁漱溟] points out, tianxia is a traditional Chinese ideal. Liang compares Chinese and Western civilizations. He states that among the following four levels—the individual, the family, the nation, and the world, the West prioritizes the individual and the nation while Chinese stresses the family and the world (1992, pp. 331-332). Nationalism emphasizes the nation while tianxia-ism underscores the world (or universe). Liang points out that since ancient times, many Chinese scholars have made a distinction between the rise and fall of a nation and the rise and fall of the world. He borrows the words of Gu Yanwu [顧炎武] to illustrate his case: "Changing family names and the country name herald the downfall of a nation, while the obstruction of benevolence and righteousness, animals feeding on

humans, and humans feeding on one another are indicative of the downfall of the world (Liang, 1992, p. 330). Liang maintains, "Nationalism may appear to be for the public but is for the individual, while tianxia-ism may appear to be for the individual but is actually for the public. China's traditional ideal was not nationalism but tianxia-ism" (1992, pp. 401-405). Tianxia-ism, which traditionally had been sought after by Chinese intellectuals, must have existed as a cultural universalism in the pre-modern era when interstate boundaries were unclear. However, how will tianxia-ism be revived in the post-modern period when all traditional mechanisms have been uprooted?

If tianxia-ism were interpreted as internationalism, tianxia-ism and nationalism would be mutually exclusive. The very terms—internationalism (tianxia-ism) and nationalism—are descriptively antithetical. However, are they antithetical in their real-life manifestations? Although tianxia-ism nominally stands in opposition to nationalism, I see the former as but a peculiar variant of Chinese-style nationalism in terms of substance. That is why I have categorized tianxia-ism as a form of nationalism and gave it a seemingly paradoxical name, "tianxia nationalism." This is reasonable if we remind ourselves of the mutually reinforcing dynamics between tianxia-sim and nationalism described by Li Shenzhi discussed earlier.

Kagami Mitsuyuki [加加美光行] at Aichi University [愛知大學] in Japan supports Li Shenzhi's line of argument and regards "tianxia-ism and nationalism to be mutually reinforcing and comprising a common and individually convergent structure" (January. 2009). Kagami contends that a similar form of nationalism had emerged in the United States and Japan, which have imperialist pasts. He even goes on to insist that "Tibetan Buddhism, Islam of the Uighurs, Christianity of the West, and other world religions are highly universal in nature, so when they merge with nationalism, each forms a mutually reinforcing dynamic relationship with it." He adds, "If nationalism interacts with the principle of unity of religion and politics, it can become exclusivist ultra-nationlism. There

are exclusivist tendencies in nationalisms based on a sense of superiority, but they also appear in nationalisms founded on a sense of being the victims of repression." Kagami states, "The amalgamated nationalism that encompasses both the universal and the individual of China's ethnic minority groups—especially the nationalisms of the Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongolians—and China's 'supranational structure'[世界國家構造的] are mutually exclusive and are sources of intense conflict." Hence, what we must first do is dismantle the structure that brings together and mutually reinforces global universalism and state nationalism. Then, we can use internationalism and tianxia-ism to keep exclusivist nationalism in check. Kagami says, "The 14th Dalai Lama is an advocate of this very idea" (January. 2009, pp. 5-6).

If China is regarded as an "imperialist nation-state," what is being implied is that China is a nation-state in form while imperialist in substance. The Chinese Revolution of 1911 brought an end to China's imperial dynasties, but the People's Republic of China inherited the unaltered territory of the Qing dynasty. Thus, an empire had to be fitted into the framework of a nation-state. In other words, while it was the dawn of the Republican Era for China, the foremost concern for its leaders was the preservation of the territorial domain and multi-ethnic structure of the Qing dynasty (Cho, 2006).

Given that there have not been any changes to the objective conditions of China's territory and multi-ethnicity, this same concern persists to this very day. Accordingly, there is a real need for the coexistence of tianxia-ism and nationalism. This is what lends support to the explanation that the formation of China's nation-state in the 20th century was the mutual penetration of the traditional Sinic world order and the modern world order (Nishimura, 1993). As long as China needs the substance of an empire and the form of a nation-state, it cannot let go of either tianxia-ism or nationalism.

Why is tianxia-ism and the tributary system, or their memory of, being stressed in contemporary China? First, tianxia-ism, a Chinese

version of universalism, was a fundamental principle of the Chinese imperialist system. Now that China is back in a position to have imperial aspirations, it may only be natural for China to think once again about universalism. The new version of tianxia-ism, which incorporates the civilizational aim of overcoming modernity, may be a scheme to build up China's soft power. However, if tianxia-ism were to be a truly civilizational alternative, it should at least be accompanied by some minimal reflections on the nationalism discourses in China, if not, by an essentialist examination of the discourse on national prosperity and military might. Otherwise, China's claim that Chinese civilization can overcome the problems of Western civilization appears to be nothing but a hollow promise of redemption. Tianxia-ism, as it stands today, cannot avoid the criticism of being but a variant of hegemonism [霸權主義]. Ultimately, tianxia-ism only strengthens nationalism, something it is meant to surmount.

Second, from what I have observed, China consistently talks about world peace using the concepts of tianxia and datong [大同], both in the best of times and in the worst of times. China talks about them today as it did a century ago. Tianxia-ism enjoys significant support from divergent groups. Is this a mere coincidence? Perhaps it may be pointing to the fact that in China, the discourse on tianxia-ism and the tributary system takes the place of the discourse on East Asia and Asia. China may think that it does not need to formulate and propose a new and elaborate discourse. The reason is that the tributary system, the materialization of tianxia-ism and Sinocentrism, was a historical reality. To boot, as Mark Selden has argued, there are assessments that East Asia enjoyed prolonged peace and relative prosperity in the 18th century when the Sincoentric world order was at its zenith (Summer 2009, p. 337).[7] The discussion of tianxia and

[7] While the claim that the region was peaceful under the Sinocentric world order may be thoroughly acceptable, it must also be noted that there are assessments that the Sinocentric world order, which was not founded not on a sense of equality but for the mutual gains of the suzerain

the tributary system emerged at the turn of a century and in tandem with China's economic rise. While it may just be my own unique take, this seems to evidence the Chinese scholars' perception of East Asia as being "inside" or "peripheral" to China, not as a "region."

At this point, I would like to move on to the discussion of the "East Asian Community." It is in this discussion that the concepts of "region" and "periphery" make their appearance. Along with nationalism, the concept of an "East Asian Community" is closely tied to China's strategies for East Asia and the world at large. In sum, as per the analysis of Zhu Jianrong [朱建荣], a Chinese professor at Toyo Gakuen University, China was intent on maintaining the tributary system even after the Opium War and did not consider its neighbors to be its equal. The first time China started to talk seriously about Asia was after losing Joseon, its last tributary state, after the Sino-Japanese War. This was after the emergence of the Asia-vs.-Europe/United States rivalry that Japan had invented for its Pan-Asianism. Liang Qichao and Chinese scholars who had lived or studied in Japan called for Asia's resurgence. Sun Yatsen became an especially avid proponent of a new Asianism (Zhu, 2006, p. 154).

However, China soon became preoccupied with various internal and external troubles, and it was not until the reform and opening that China's interest in Asia was rekindled. At the onset of its reform and opening, China did not have the wherewithal to delve deeply into the matter. However, everything changed after the 1997 Asian financial crisis and China homed in on East Asia. There was a shift in the focus of China's foreign policy—from freeloading to power-ism (Lee, 2004, pp. 34-37). In substance, China transitioned from great-power diplomacy to good-neighbor diplomacy. It was the first time China's so-called foreign

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state and the tributary state, was a system based on "misunderstandings of convenience" in order to "legitimize the circumstances of the time."

policy strategy toward Asia was clearly delineated. Until the end of the 1990s, China prioritized its relations with major powers—i.e., United States, Russia, and Europe. When relations with these nations had been set on a stable course, China turned to its neighbors in 2003 and made small-power diplomacy its foremost foreign policy priority. China certainly had not looked at Asia as a region; Asia had merely what lied in its "peripheries." However, after the late 1990s, China began to see Asia as one coherent "region" (Zhu, 2006, p. 156). Needless to say, underlying this new view of Asia was China's newfound confidence in its economy.

Based on this change in perception, the Chinese government began proposing a number of principles about an "East Asian community" through diverse channels. Even Hu Jintao [胡錦濤] and Wen Jiabao [溫家寶] began using the terminology "East Asian Community." China's basic position on an "East Asian community" puts the economy at the starting point from which cooperation can gradually expand to politics, society, and culture to build intestate trust and lead to the eventual institutionalization of relevant norms and practices (Academy of Social Sciences, 2004). Second, the East Asian Community should be based on pluralist values. This takes into consideration the countless internal contradictions and conflicts that can exist in a plan for regional cooperation. It also allows for the fact that unlike NAFTA and the EU, which had been founded for clearly designated goals, East Asia requires a more complex set of processes that befit its regional realities. Third, if China does not take the leadership position in the pursuit of a regional community, it should be open to the participation of great powers outside the region. This is based on the assessment that China's neighbors will become wary if China gives off the impression that it is rushing to become a regional superpower. It also takes into consideration the need for communication and adjustments concerning the "East Asian Community" within China itself. China is calling for a new form of regionalism that is open and accepting (Zhu, 2006, pp. 159-161) because it is aware of the long road ahead in terms of its economic growth. That

is, China is determined not to create conditions that can be economically detrimental. China's vision for an East Asian community appears to be closely linked to recent changes in its foreign policy direction. China used to say that it should hide its capacities and bide its time [韜光養晦]. Now, the guiding principle of its foreign policy is China's peaceful rise [和平崛起].

How can we understand China's vision for an East Asian community in conjunction with Chinese nationalism? There cannot but be differences in the nationalism discourses of the scholarly community and that of the government. The government has to be more rational because it has to make important decisions and policies. However, that does not mean that the nationalism discourses in academia have no boundaries. For one, they are influenced by the traditional Chinese belief that everyone, no matter how lowly, plays a role in the rise and collapse of the world. Therefore, the government discourse and the scholarly discourses on nationalism are distinct yet interwoven and interwoven yet distinct. After the reform and opening, however, the Chinese government placed economic development at the very top of its agenda and has not hesitated to eliminate whatever it saw as obstacles to China's economic growth. For the same reason, the Chinese government has been carrying out a hedging strategy concerning nationalism: it has warned against extreme forms of nationalism while also accepting the fact that nationalism is a practical necessity. It cannot be denied that China's vision for an East Asian community emerged from the larger framework of economic growth. Be that as it may, we must pay attention to the shift in China's perception of East Asia resulting from this process. While East Asia used to be regarded by China as random "peripheries," it is now considered a coherent "region."

V. China's Nationalism and Democracy: Seeking a 21st-Century Rule of Right [王道]

A senior Korean academic said, "While Japan sees East Asia as an extension of itself, China sees East Asia as a part of itself" (Lim Hyung-taek, 1997). In his description, China's and Japan's perceptions of East Asia is the point. Then, what is Korea's perception of East Asia?

If today's discourse on tianxia-ism and the tributary system is considered to be a substitute for a discourse on East Asia, this discourse is not something with which China is aware. In such a discourse, East Asia may not be regarded as a "region" but as "peripheries." If that is the case, China's discourse on East Asia lacks something important, having jumped from the 19th century to the 21st century without taking in the lessons of the 20th century. It is deprived of the history of the struggle for human liberation of the 20th century. It could be considered a 19th-century discourse on East Asia set in the 21st century. Where are the legacies of China's dual resistance in the 20th century against tradition and modernity?

The sense of equality achieved by 20th century modernity is common knowledge to the peoples of East Asia in the 21st century. Accordingly, Chinese intellectuals must remind themselves that "the opportunistic rule of right" (also know as the "kingly way") of Sun Yatsen's "Greater Asianism" no longer resonates to the 21st century youth of East Asia. In certain respects, Sun Yatsen's rule of right is a moral principle that is China's alone. Nevertheless, the Chinese academia regards it as being common to East Asia and Asia at large. The fact that the rule of right is not translatable is closely tied to Chinese academics' tendency to relativize themselves and China. If a moral principle does not resonate with East Asia and Asia at large, it cannot be a moral principle for China either unless China is satisfied being a league of its own.

What does today's younger generation of Chinese think about Sun

Yatsen's Great Asianism? According to one Japanese researcher, "Chinese youth are experiencing a form of an elated high [躁] from their nation's economic development. However, lurking in the backdrop is "political impotence" peculiar to China. That is, the high [躁] of economic growth and the low [鬱] of political impotence comprise two sides of the same coin" (Takahara, 2007, pp. 246-247). Hence, the mammonistic and materialistic attitude the Chinese youth generally exhibit can be interpreted to be a form of escape taken to find a compromise between these two sides.

In consideration of the younger generation's political "low," China needs to quickly lay down the institutional groundwork for democracy. Without it, there is a high possibility that the economic achievements it has so far attained will come to naught. Politics and economy develop together, using each other as a lever. Accordingly, while the imbalance between politics and the economy may sustain itself for a certain period of time, it cannot last very long. No one knows when China's "monster capitalism" will explode.

Given such a reality, what China needs right now is neither the overflow nor the scarcity of nationalism. It needs an internal convergence of nationalism and democracy. According to Japanese scholar Maruyama Masao [丸山眞男], such a convergence is only possible when democracy is irrationalized in direct proportion to the rationalization of nationalism (1981, p. 291). Here, the "irrationalization of democracy" means the modification of democracy befitting China's needs. It is now time for Chinese intellectuals to transcend factional divides and carry out a detailed study of how to irrationalize democracy—i.e., determine what kind of democracy would be best suited to China's realities. One way to do this is to be reminded that a nationalism that for the peoples of China and East Asia will inevitably converge with democracy.

After dismantling the Sinocentric world order, Japan missed a golden opportunity to build a new East Asian order founded on true pan-Asianism (Choi Won-sik, 2009, p. 119). China should learn from Japan's

mistake. It has taken a century for China to come face to face with a chance to reform Asia. Takeuchi Yoshimi said the ten years of Japan's Meiji Restoration had determined the course of everything that followed (2004, p. 58). Three decades of China's reform and opening period have come pass. The next ten to twenty years will be pivotal. If China is unable to propose a veritable 21st century rule of right that can resonate throughout China, East Asia, and the world, the future become murky.

I accept the claim by Chinese scholars that China has had a significantly better moral track record than the imperialist West or Japan. I will conclude by describing the 21st century rule of right China should propose in the form a moralistic discourse beloved by the Chinese. I strongly recommend "asymmetric ethics" as China's 21st century rule of right. If opportunistic ethics and reciprocal ethics were the moral codes of the 19th century and 20th century, respectively, the 21st century demands "asymmetric ethics." Asymmetric ethics is of course an ethics of request. It is similar to Derrida's concept of "hospitality." Hospitality in the relationship between the powerful and the weak is an act that is first demanded of the powerful. Whether they be individuals or states, all subjects exist within the hierarchical relationships of reality. Therefore, hospitality is a virtue demanded of all states and all subjects. If China aims to reconstruct tianxia-ism and the tributary system, it has to be a reconstruction that borders on dismantlement. China itself must also undergo a major overhaul based on the asymmetric ethics discussed above. Only then will China secure the justification to surmount Western values and the substance to build a new order in China.

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